

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 08824 200935Z

15

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /067 W

----- 061602

R 200900Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1889

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 8824

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJECT: GOK MOVES TO QUELL NAIROBI POLITICAL AGITATION

REF: A. NAIROBI 8708, B. NAIROBI 8442

1. POLITICAL AGITATION IN NAIROBI INCREASED AFTER PUNITIVE EFFORT WAS LAUNCHED (REF A) TO EXPEL DISSIDENT CITY COUNCILLORS FROM RULING PARTY KANU. ON AUG. 18 STUBBORNLY INDEPENDENT NAIROBI BRANCH KANU OFFICIALS CHALLENGED LEGITIMACY OF EXPULSION AND ANNOUNCED BRANCH EXECUTIVE WOULD HOLD MEETING FOLLOWING DAY "TO RESOLVE CRISIS."

2. NAIROBI PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER BOIT, WHI IS RESPONSIBLE TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, APPEARED AT KANU BRANCH EXECUTIVE MEETING AUG. 19 AND FORBADE GROUP FROM DISCUSSING CRISIS. PC ALSO ANNOUNCED ALL FUTURE NAIROBI BRANCH KANU MEETINGS WILL HAVE TO BE LICENSED BY HIS OFFICE. IN EFFECT, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS THUS ASSERTED VETO POWER OVER ANY LOCAL PARTY MEETING WHICH MIGHT ATTEMPT TO REVERSE EXPULSION MOVE AGAINST RECALCITRANT COUNCILLORS.

3. SEVERAL DOZEN DEMONSTRATORS, MOSTLY WOMEN, ATTEMPTED TO ENTER KANU HEADQUATERS TO ATTEND MEETING. POLICE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 NAIROB 08824 200935Z

APPARENTLY PREPARED FOR THIS POSSIBILITY, TURNED THEM

AWAY PEACEFULLY.

4. COMMENT: CONTINUED INSUBORDINATION OF DEPUTY MAYOR NGUMBA'S SUPPORTERS HAS BECOME ACUTE EMBARRASSMENT TO GOVERNMENT. IN LIGHT OF AWKWARD BACKFIRE OF KANU EXPULSION THREAT, ISSUE IS INCREASINGLY ONE OF REASSERTING NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY RATHER THAN SIMPLY INSURING RE-ELECTION OF MARGARET KENYATTA AS MAYOR. AT SAME TIME IT IS OBVIOUS PRESIDENT KENYATTA WOULD LIKE TO AVOID PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN HEAVY-HANDED MOVES TO PROTECT DAUGHTER'S POLITICAL POSITION. ACCORDING OFFICIALS KENYA NEWS AGENCY, ON AUG. 15 HE TOLD DELEGATION OF MAYOR'S BACKERS FROM NAIROBI KANU BRANCH, "I CAN ONLY INTERVENE AT A TIME WHEN AN ORGANIZATION HAS FAILED TO FULFILL ITS DUTIES...YOU HAVE NO ONE TO BLAME BUT YOURSELVES IF LEADERS YOU ELECT ACT CONTRARY TO YOUR INTEREST." STATEMENT WAS EVIDENTLY CONSTRUED BY MAYOR'S FACTION AS GO-AHEAD FOR EXPULSION OF OPPONENTS FROM KANU, WHILE PRESERVING APPEARANCE OF PRESIDENTIAL IMPARTIALITY. NEVERTHELESS, IF LATEST MOVE FAILS TO SILENCE OPPOSITION, GOVERNMENT WILL NOT SHRINK FROM STRONGER MEASURES.

MARSHALL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MAYOR, LOCAL ELECTIONS, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NAIROB08824
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760319-0872
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760834/aaaabdha.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 NAIROBI 8708, 76 NAIROBI 8442
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <08 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOK MOVES TO QUELL NAIROBI POLITICAL AGITATION
TAGS: PINT, KE, (KENYATTA, MARGARET)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006